

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS) REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

This report provides an overview of three meetings which took place on September 2-6, 2019, in Portland, Oregon:

- 2nd Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) Technical Meeting
- 4th Joint Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) - Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Northern Committee (NC) Meeting
- 15th Regular Session of the NC (NC15)

The U.S. delegation of approximately 35 individuals was led by Michael Tosatto of the NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office (PIRO), and included representatives of the U.S. government (NMFS PIRO and WCR, and Department of State); the states of California, Oregon, and Washington; the Pacific Fishery Management Council; non-governmental organizations; and industry. Meeting documents, including Chairs' reports and proposals are available on the [NC15 website](#).

CDS Technical Meeting

The Pacific bluefin tuna (PBF) 2nd CDS Technical Meeting was held one day in advance of NC15 and the Joint WG, and chaired by Shingo Ota (Japan). Discussions were focused on a proposal by Japan outlining the major elements to be included in a draft WCPFC Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) for a PBF CDS. The next Technical Meeting will likely be held in conjunction with the next meeting of the Joint WG.

Joint IATTC-WCPFC NC Working Group (Joint WG)

The Joint WG was co-chaired by Dorothy Lowman (United States) and Masa Miyahara (Japan) and focused on draft CMMs by Japan and Korea, which included catch increases. The Joint WG did not recommend catch increases for 2020. However, the Joint WG was amenable to providing some flexibility to fishermen in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO). The Joint WG recommended that Japan could: (1) comply with the catch and effort limits using an annual cycle that differs from the calendar year; (2) allow a higher percentage of under-harvest in 2019 to carry over to the 2020 catch limit, in a manner similar to the biennial cycle used in IATTC resolutions; and (3) allow a maximum of 300 metric tons of "large fish" (fish greater than 30 kilograms) to be transferred from Chinese Taipei's large-fish catch limit to Japan's large-fish catch limit in 2020 only.

The Joint WG recommended that the IATTC and WCPFC adopt two proposals by the United States, with modifications, to (1) establish Terms of Reference for the management strategy evaluation (MSE) on PBF, and (2) consider specific harvest control rules and reference points in the future MSE. The Terms of Reference clarified the purpose of the MSE and established the Joint WG as the body which will make recommendations for the MSE, while considering input from participants at stakeholder workshops.

The Joint WG also acknowledged the expansion of WCPO small-fish purse seine fisheries starting in the mid-1990s and its resulting increase in fishing mortality and transfer of fishery impacts from the Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) to the WCPO. The Joint WG also noted the U.S. position that future catch increases in catch will need to contribute to rebalancing the distribution of fishing opportunities between the WCPO and EPO, such as through a 50-50 split in the allocation of any catch limit increases between WCPFC and IATTC. The Joint WG also recommended a list of harvest scenarios to be evaluated by the International Scientific Committee on Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean, which include scenarios involving 50-50 splits in catch increases.

Northern Committee

The NC did not have a quorum, and therefore was unable to recommend decisions to the WCPFC. Nonetheless, members present discussed a number of issues and prepared a report that will be considered when the NC convenes on the margins of the WCPFC meeting in December 2020. Japan intends to host the NC in 2020, and Canada offered to host in 2021.